



Security Council

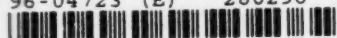
Distr.
GENERAL

S/1996/144
28 February 1996
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

LETTER DATED 28 FEBRUARY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF CUBA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to request that the letter from the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of Cuba dated 28 February 1996, which is attached hereto, be circulated
as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Brunc RODRIGUEZ PARRILLA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Cuba



Annex

Letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba
dated 28 February 1996

With a rapidity that Cuba has found to be absent on dozens of occasions, especially when it has sustained dozens of attacks and is in addition being subjected to a brutal blockade that has been condemned four times by the General Assembly, the Security Council of the United Nations met early on Tuesday morning to examine the situation created by the shooting down of two pirate aircraft in Cuban airspace. This situation illustrates the price small independent countries have to pay for living in a unipolar world under the hegemony of the United States. Under these circumstances, the Security Council, which already has an extremely poor record of biased actions subordinated to the interests of the major Powers, and whose functioning is governed by the arbitrary practice of the veto, became a branch of the United States Department of State.

Following the demise of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc, which laid the foundations for undisputed hegemony, the United States, with the constant support of its western allies, began an unrestrained race to transform the Security Council into a kind of supreme universal tribunal for passing judgement on any country that disobeyed its designs and for using troops assembled under the flag of the United Nations as a planet-wide police force.

Cuba, together with a growing number of countries, has been giving timely and energetic warning of this situation, which reveals the urgency of working to democratize the United Nations and finding procedures for making the Security Council more representative and impartial. The arbitrary actions by the Security Council, the open intervention against other countries, the contempt for the principle of national sovereignty, the anti-democratic methods and the usurpation of functions have led not only to distortion of the purposes and activities of the United Nations, but also to an absolute preponderance of the United States in its decision.

In the case of Cuba, to the enormous capacity the United States possesses of bringing pressure to bear has been added the fortuitous circumstance that it is currently occupying the rotating presidency of the Council. The United States has not hesitated to take advantage of both circumstances in order to promote, last Sunday, a hurried round of consultations during which Ambassadors argued, with full justification, that they lacked sufficient information on the incident and needed to consult their respective capitals. Allowing scarcely any time, and above all without providing any new information, the United States, in its capacity as president, convened the Council for a hasty meeting early on Tuesday morning, at which the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, who at that time was travelling to United Nations Headquarters in New York for the sole purpose of attending the Council meeting, could not even be present.

Statements by a number of Council members urging United States Ambassador Madeleine Albright, presiding over the Council, to wait just a few hours for the Cuban Foreign Minister to arrive were in vain.

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On the contrary, the United States Department of State delayed for as long as it could the issuance of the visa to Minister Robaina, who was already in Mexico, ready to travel on to New York. The Council approved the statement at 3.30 a.m. on Tuesday, and the visa was granted to Minister Robaina at 4.30 a.m., one hour later.

The statement reads as follows:

"The Security Council strongly deplores the shooting down by the Cuban air force of two civil aircraft on 24 February 1996, which apparently has resulted in the death of four persons.

"The Security Council recalls that according to international law, as reflected in Article 3 bis of the International Convention on Civil Aviation of 7 December 1944 added by the Montreal Protocol of 10 May 1984, States must refrain from the use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight and must not endanger the lives of persons on board and the safety of aircraft. States are obliged to respect international law and human rights norms in all circumstances.

"The Security Council requests that the International Civil Aviation Organization investigate this incident in its entirety and calls on the Governments concerned to cooperate fully with this investigation. The Council requests that the International Civil Aviation Organization report its findings to the Council as soon as possible. The Council will consider that report and any further information presented to it without delay."

Actually, thanks to the honourable attitude of some important members of the Council, the statement approved is fairly far from what the United States wanted.

The truth is that Cuba expressed regret, even before the Security Council did, over the loss of human lives as a result of the irresponsible violations of our sovereignty, and on that point we are in agreement. But we cannot fail to recall that in Barbados 73 people, including many adolescents, who were not violating laws of any country, died in a brutal act of sabotage, that the criminals are being protected by the United States, and that no regret has been expressed in the Security Council.

A good definition is needed of what a civilian aircraft is. Many crimes have been committed against our country using allegedly civilian aircraft coming from the United States. We may recall that, using "civilian aircraft", counter-revolutionary pilots bombed Havana and various places in Cuba. From "civilian aircraft", for years, they dropped explosives and incendiaries over our sugar plantations and our economic facilities, "civilian aircraft" were used to introduce spies and saboteurs into the country, and, still more serious, acts of biological warfare were conducted.

With regard to the ICAO investigation, although it is part of the United Nations manoeuvre to bring the incident before the Security Council, we are not afraid of it; on the contrary, we accept it and we demand that it should be rapid and impartial, and that it should take into account all the background

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information and the gross provocations we are suffering from as a result of the repeated violation of our airspace and the risks they entailed to air traffic and to our country.

We hope that the United States, for its part, will fulfil its obligation to cooperate fully with the investigation in accordance with that same statement by the Security Council.

Nevertheless, there is something that Cuba will not discuss either with the Security Council or with experts of any organization: our right and our duty to protect our country's sovereignty, to preserve our frontiers and to defend at any cost the independence of our homeland.
